This pamphlet was produced in order to introduce education in Akita to people within and outside of Akita Prefecture. In addition, we hope to combine all of our efforts to advance our educational system, turning Akita into a prefecture associated with education.
Children playing in sand at a center for early childhood education and care

Unified efforts to support our children

In April 2004, Akita Prefecture combined the preschool and nursery school administrations into one body under the BOE, called the Unification of Kindergarten and Nursery Development Division (UKNDD). Because of the efforts of this department, preschool education in Akita has been running smoothly.

High quality education for preschool children

We offer various training programs for all preschool educators in Akita. In addition, members of the UKNDD make school visits and give advice. Doing so, we ensure that every child is provided with high quality education.

Children’s independence through education

We put emphasis on education that encourages and supports the independence of children. Rather than holding one-sided lessons, preschool teachers provide interesting classes by creating an educational environment with children and actively attracting their interests. We hope our students will build up experience by making discoveries, finding questions and issues through various activities, and develop their ability to solve problems.

In addition, kindergartens and nursery schools support parents by providing information and advice about raising children.
Rich spirits and healthy bodies
Through experiences in the local area and nature, children learn about the blessing of nature, the kindness of people in Akita, and come to love their hometowns more and enrich their spirits. In addition, since 2011, we have been working on promoting children’s health through our motto “three daily meals, outdoor play, and healthy life-habits.”

Connections with Elementary Schools
In Akita Prefecture, we place an emphasis on facilitating transition from a play-centric learning style to classroom studying. We are continuing to promote cooperation between elementary schools and preschools by providing joint workshops for teachers, and creating opportunities for exchanges between them.

Support for Working Parents
◆ For families with work and childcare needs, we sponsor various services for children. (2017)
  • Temporary custody: 185 places
  • Extended-hours childcare: 191 places
  • Sick child care: 57 places

Economic Assistance for Preschool Education
◆ In nursery schools, if siblings are enrolled at the same time, the entrance fee is halved. For the third and younger siblings, the fee is free. Depending on the family’s income, municipalities will subsidize the cost. (Assistance for costs of children’s education/day care, and encouragement of early education)
◆ In all municipalities, kindergartens and nursery schools help low income families to buy school supplies and to pay for field trips by subsidizing costs. (Project to supplement costs)
Elementary and Junior High Schools

- Number of elementary schools: 199 (1 national),
  Number of junior high schools: 114 (1 national, 3 prefectural)
  Number of compulsory education schools: 1 (2018)
- Akita has received top marks on the National Assessment of Academic Ability 10 Times in a row
- Non-attendance average (ES, JHS): 9.1 (13.5) per 1000 students
  Incidents of violence (ES, JHS, SHS): 1.3 (4.4) cases/1000 students
  Incidents of bullying (ES, JHS, SHS, special needs): 28.4 (23.8) cases/1000 students

Note: Data is from 2016 survey, ( ) is the Japanese average, rank is from least to greatest

Top Level Academic Ability in Japan

In Akita, we make use of the tests below to check students’ academic abilities.

1. April: The Survey of Academic & Scholarly Ability
2. December: The Survey of Prefectural Scholarly Circumstances
3. March: Senior High School Entrance Exams

Every junior high school tries to grasp students’ abilities by analyzing the results and create better lessons by repeating the cycle (*1→2→3). Elementary schools analyze the two surveys above (1 and 2).

![2018 National Assessment of Academic Ability in Japan]

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>ES 6th Results</th>
<th>JHS 3rd Results</th>
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<tr>
<td>Japanese A</td>
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<td>Japanese B</td>
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<td>Mathematics A</td>
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<td>Science</td>
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*The results are the rankings in Japan.
*Test A: Questions which mainly check students’ basic knowledge and skills.
*Test B: Questions which mainly check ability to apply knowledge and skills to problem solving.

Nurturing children who inquire

To instill in children the ability they need to live well in society, we strive to raise children who are not afraid of asking questions. Not only during class, but in all situations, we encourage students to find and solve problems on their own. In addition to speaking and presenting their opinions or questions, students learn to find problems and cooperate with their friends to find solutions.

Inquiry-Based Learning method: Recognized all over Japan

Akita Prefecture widely uses the inquiry-based learning method. Through this method, students improve their thinking and presentation skills. These skills contribute to the good result in the National Assessment of Academic Ability.
Students independently find problems, cooperate to find solutions, and then widen and deepen their thoughts. The inquiry-based learning method in Akita is highly regarded as needed in Japan.

Four steps of Akita’s Inquiry-based learning method

1. Prospect for the study
2. Confirm own thought
3. Discuss within a group
4. Review what one has learned

Creating a safe space for students

All schools strive to aid students so that they can make great connections with others and create a lively school environment for all. We intentionally create this type of place, hoping that students will feel that they are needed or have been of use to others.

Support for the transition from elementary to junior high school

All over Japan, there is a problem with what is known as the “junior high school gap,” but we try hard to avoid this.

In Akita, teachers of elementary and junior high schools exchange information about the children in their schools. During school events, they encourage interaction between students of elementary schools and junior high schools in order to make the transition easier.

Career education with regional roots

We are promoting career education with regional roots to raise our children, as they are the future of our prefecture and country. Working with local residents, students get first-hand work experience, learn how to revitalize their surrounding areas, and so on. Schools, households, and the region establish an amazing educational environment.

ES & JHS students are greeting others with a local volunteer

ES students selling rice that they planted and raised with the help of local farmers

JHS teacher teaching at an ES

Economic Support for Elementary and Junior High Education

- In all municipalities, we recognize financial situations in which school attendance can be difficult. For families of these elementary and JHS students, school supplies, school meals, field trip money, and other costs are subsidized.
Senior High Schools

- Number of prefectural senior high schools: 46. Number of municipal: 2. Number of private: 5 (2018)
- University entrance rate: 46.0 (%) 54.7%, Percent in national and municipal universities: (+) 54.0%
  Vocational school entrance rate: 18.6 (%) 16.2%
  Employment rate of students: 30.2 (%) 17.8%
- Non-attendance average: 12.3 (14.6) per 1000 students (16th) lowest in the country
  Dropout rate: 0.9 (1.4) % (3rd lowest in the country)

Note: Career choice data is as of March 2017 graduates. Anything within () is the national average. Non-attendance and dropout rankings are arranged from least to greatest amount of students leaving schools.

Education that focuses on various career paths

Senior high schools in Akita give lessons aimed at developing students’ skills for researching and studying issues independently. Additionally, to help students plan their careers, students are provided with opportunities such as internships, commercial and volunteer work with local citizens, lectures on preparing for higher education and excursions at local hospitals.

Efforts to make Akita’s English ability best in Japan

We are working on various projects so that all students in Akita will be able to understand information provided in English and express their thoughts in the language. Schools are also working on various measures to improve English education. The Prefectural Board of Education offers English Camp, in which the participants experience a lot of activities in English with various ALTs and exchange students from universities in Akita.

High schools with unique characteristics and appeals

In order to enforce advanced education, MEXT officially designated some of our schools as special schools: three of them are “Super Science High Schools,” focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Akita Hokuyo SHS, Akita Chuo SHS, Yokote SHS), one is a “Super Global High School,” with an education designed to foster people who can make progress in a globalized society (Akita Minami SHS),

Medial training seminar

English Camp

Tohoku SSH Science Community
and one is a “Super Professional High School,” which prepares students for specialized working skills (Omagari Agricultural SHS).

Education that fosters global leaders

Akita Minami SHS, our designated Super Global High School, is highly evaluated from both outside and within Japan for its various efforts in research presentation. The school consists of both a junior high school and a senior high school. Through six years of integrated education, we hope SGH-related activities they participate in will foster in students a strong desire to support Japan and Akita.

Space IO

Space IO is a facility for elementary, junior high, and graduated junior high students who cannot attend school for various reasons. Students can feel safe in an environment where they can study without stress, and learn under the support of instructors and counsellors. These facilities are attached to four prefectural senior high schools.

“Summer Camp” with University Cooperation

Career education for students has a large impact on their lives. In Akita, for three days in August, first year senior high school students can attend “Summer Camp with University Cooperation.” In this event, students can learn more about university studies and searching for a job after graduation.

Economic Support for Senior High School and Post–secondary Education

◆ In Akita, households that make less than 9.1 million yen/yr. can send their children to public high schools free of charge.
◆ Also, families on welfare or under exemption will be provided extra financial aid for educational costs beyond classes.
Special Support Schools

- Number of prefectoral schools: 14, Number of national schools: 1 (2018)
- Employment rate of graduates from special support schools: 31.4 (31.9)% 《12th highest》

Note: Employment rate is based on statistics from March 2018 graduates: if no year is written otherwise, statistics are from 2017. Anything within ( ) is the national average

Education for students with disabilities

In Akita, special support education is designed according to students’ disabilities so that they can become independent and contribute to society. Instructors create individual learning plans which meet each student’s particular needs. Additionally, we place nurses in some schools if necessary. With the collaborative effort of welfare, and labor agencies, we support these children until adulthood.

How our special support schools grow

Local elementary, junior, and senior high schools continue to have exchange activities with special support schools. Students also create a deeper connection with local residents by contributing to the area through activities such as clean-up events. Special support schools receive a lot of assistance to provide education in which students can develop a deeper understanding of the area.

Sufficient work education

We have implemented classwork that focuses on making goods and selling them through local businesses. Students learn from experts how to do farm work or make products, and learn the meaning of working.

We also hold work education festivals, and show our students’ potential to people from

![Using hands to create artwork in an individual lesson](image)

![Learning how to make Kiritampo with the local women’s committee](image)

![Picking apples with local high school students](image)

![Creating art with local high schoolers in the Art Club](image)

Employment rate of students from SSSs

* In order to account for numbers from surveyed schools that had students who did not use Hello Work, values on the above dotted line may differ
various businesses. As a result of these efforts, the number of students hired after graduation has been increasing for the past several years.

Support for local special support education
To fulfill the role of a support center for special support education in local areas, the staff of special support schools visit kindergartens, nursery schools, elementary, junior and senior high schools, and conduct staff training sessions. Also, schools for visual and auditory impairments in Akita City hold “satellite classes” in the northern and southern areas of the prefecture.

Kagayaki no Oka, Akita’s general support area
In the suburbs of Akita City is Kagayaki no Oka, Akita’s support area for medical treatment and special support education. We joined three special support schools for visual, auditory, and orthopedically impaired respectively, to the Prefectural Rehabilitation Center.

At Kagayaki no Oka, they send useful information to all areas of Akita, which establish its role as a central pillar for special support education.

Financial Aid for Special Support Education
◆ In order to provide financial support for families with children in need of special support education, Akita has established financial aid based on household income and support a part of school transport, school lunch, textbook costs, school supplies, and even field trip costs.
# Club Activities

- Participation in club activities
  - Junior High School: Sports 15,350 (67.6%), Cultural 5,480 (24.1%)
  - Senior High School (Public full day schools): Sports 11,697 (53.9%), Cultural 6,429 (29.6%)

Note: Data is as of 2017

## Club activities that enrich students’ life and personal growth

In Akita, many students join club activities and try hard with others who share similar interests in sports or cultural activities. In clubs, students learn how to be independent, cooperative, responsible, and find solidarity. Some schools have clubs in which students enjoy local folk arts and entertainment.

![Performing at the National Marching Contest](image1)

![Performing the Nishimonai Bon Dance](image2)

![Noshiro Basketball Winter Cup](image3)

## Project for improving senior high school sports

We have designated some senior high schools as “Sports Enhancement Senior High Schools*” focused on fostering athletes that can compete in Japan and around the world. We dispatch special club coaches and technical advisors to these base schools.

*From April 2018 13 schools 13 competitions (18 sports)

![2018 National Winter Skiing Competition](image4)

## Project for improving senior high school baseball

In 2016, we started the “Project to Raise Future High School Baseball Players” to support the training of elementary and junior high school students in the sport. Project staff look over the data from past years and create more effective methods of coaching. We are actively engaging in various measures, aiming to strengthen baseball in Akita.

![Adviser on the Project to Raise Future High School Baseball Players](image5)
Promotion of reading at an early age

Akita is the first prefecture to establish a reading ordinance, designating November 1st as “Citizens’ Reading Day,” to encourage citizens to read more. In order to get children more attached to books, starting at the preschool level, we give children picture books and hold story telling events.

Furthermore, at all elementary and junior high schools in Akita, students participate in morning reading activities. In senior high schools, book lovers organize storytelling events, and even attend book review competitions, known as “Biblio Battle,” which show the fun in reading.

Hands-on outside school activities

For children, hands-on experiences, such as group overnight camps or artistic and cultural activities, are extremely important. Outside of school, students can use three youth outdoor learning centers and Akita Shirakami Learning Center are used for outdoor activities. For cultural and art activities, the Akita Museum of Art, the Akita Museum of Modern Art and the Akita Prefectural Museum are also available for students to learn about the art, history and nature of Akita.

A Direct Experience of Akita’s Superior Educational Environment

In cooperation with Kitaakita City, Akita Prefecture offers the “Study in Akita” program, where students can directly experience Akita’s educational environment. Through this program, students can attend classes, hands on activities which utilize Akita’s nature, and other types of creative work.


Getting fit through fun P.E. classes

We give students the most possible opportunities to get fit through jogging or rope skipping before school and between classes, and hold sports events such as sports day.

In addition, we make the most of the winter season by providing winter sports classes such as skiing, snowboarding, and skating. Through this, we encourage students to enjoy sports in winter.

Furthermore, we dispatch sports instructors in local areas and high school PE teachers to elementary and junior high schools to raise interests in sports among young children. In elementary schools, they support track & field, gymnastics, and swimming, and in junior high school, martial arts. As a result, Akita is one of the top prefectures in Japan concerning students’ fondness for exercise.*

*5th yr. ES: Boys 79.9%(1st in Japan), Girls 62.0%(1st in Japan), 2nd yr. JHS: Boys 69.1%(3rd in Japan), Girls 51.2%(2nd in Japan)

Walking to school initiative

Akita has enacted the “Let’s Trek Our Way to School” movement and encourages children to commute on foot to school for their health.

Tasty school lunches with Akita food

Akita Prefecture promotes food and dietary education through providing school lunches made with the finest local ingredients. In addition, through food education, students learn about the importance of Akita food, industry, nature, and culture.
Maintaining a regular lifestyle (sleep early, wake up early, eat breakfast, home studies)

Students in Akita follow a consistent lifestyle of going to bed and waking up at the same time every day and having breakfast. In the “Prefectural Survey of Students’ Lifestyles,” students in Akita go to bed and get up earlier than the national average. It is said that this lifestyle contributes to Akita students' great academic ability.

Additionally, in elementary and junior high schools, they use Home Studies Notebooks so that they will acquire their own study habits. In the morning, the students submit the notebooks to their homeroom teachers, and at the end of the day, the notebooks are handed back to them with comments from the teacher.

It is said that these lifestyle and learning habits, which have been created with the cooperation of schools and families, are a crucial characteristic specific to Akita.

Akita’s “Wakasugi*” and the seven rules for nurture

The Prefectural Board of Education has encouraged “the Seven Rules for Akita’s Wakasugi.” We are proud of our great educational environment created through these rules and by placing importance in children’s education with the cooperation of everyone in Akita Prefecture.

*We refer to our children, who bear the responsibility of Akita’s future, as “Wakasugi” (young cedar)

The Seven Rules of Nurture for Akita’s Wakasugi

1. Sleep and wake early, eat breakfast; keep a life rhythm
2. Always exchange greetings; keep rules and promises
3. Gain the power to think and inquire through reading, speaking and writing
4. Find the answer on your own, continue your studies at home
5. Be conscious of your future career; enjoy work experience and internships
6. Learn at school and in town; dreams begin at home
7. Let’s make Akita’s future together; Have the will to carry our home forward
**Akita Prefectural Museum**

This museum is located in the Kanaashi district, 15km north of central Akita City. Inside there are halls for things like the history of civilization, natural history, and other exhibits.

Akita’s culture has been carefully preserved, and visitors can experience all of Akita’s wonders here.

**Akita Prefectural Museum of Art**

This museum is located in the center of Akita City, and features Tsuguharu Fujita’s 20 m wide mural “Events of Akita,” which was created in 1937 in 174 hours. The museum offers art and guidance to deepen students’ appreciation for art.

**Akita Prefectural Museum of Modern Art**

This museum is in southern Akita in Yokote City, and mainly contains works created by artists related to Akita. The museum hosts many opportunities for appreciating art and hands-on art activities for students as a part of class. Also, it provides Museum Delivery Service for schools far away from it.

**Akita Prefectural Museum of Agricultural Science**

This museum is in Daisen City, in southern Akita. You can enjoy learning about the past, present, and future of agriculture in Akita. There are displays about the forefathers of agriculture in Akita, as well as an antique Magariya house, which has been designated as a National Tangible Cultural Asset. In the tropical greenhouse, approximately 200 species of tropical plants grow, and can be observed all year round.
The largest amount of Important Intangible Folklore Cultural Assets in Japan

In Akita, there is a vast amount of folk entertainment, festivals, and events held year round which have been passed down since ancient times. The number of events designated as National Important Intangible Cultural Assets is the largest in Japan. Masters of these traditions visit elementary schools and perform live for the students in order to pass on this cultural inheritance to the next generation, as well as raise future performers.

Historical sites that raise awareness of our homeland

We maintain and utilize our historical sites in order to have a direct learning experience and continue studying our homeland. There are many events regularly held at these sites, such as hands-on historical activities for students and citizen-assisted restoration projects for adults. The historical sites in Akita are used so that citizens of all ages can rediscover our homeland and grow to appreciate it.

Hokkaido and Northern Tohoku Jomon Ruins

In Akita, there are two significant historic cultural ruins of the Jomon Era, the Oyu Stone Circles (Kazuno City) and the Isedotai Ruins (Kitaakita City). Both places are considered to be ritual grounds for people who lived approximately 4,000 years ago. In addition to these two sites, there are other Jomon Era ruins in Hokkaido, Aomori, and Iwate. Akita and these three prefectures are trying to have the ruins registered on the World Heritage Site List.
★ Contact Information ★

P2–3 Kindergartens and Nursery Schools → Unification of Kindergarten and Nursery Development Division

P4–5 Elementary and Junior High Schools → Compulsory Education Division

P6–7 Senior High Schools → Senior High School Education Division

P8–9 Special Support Schools → Special Support Education Division

P10 Club Activities → Compulsory Education Division, Senior High School Education Division, Special Support Education Division, Health and Physical Education Division

P11 Reading and Hands-on Activities → Lifelong Learning Division

P12 Body Strength and Fitness → Health and Physical Education Division

P13 Lifestyle → Compulsory Education Division, Health and Physical Education Division

P14 Prefectural Museum, Museum of Art, Museum of Agricultural Science → Lifelong Learning Division

P15 Cultural Properties → Cultural Assets Preservation Office

★ Phone number ★

Unification of Kindergarten and Nursery Development Division: 018-860-5127

Compulsory Education Division: 018-860-5141

Senior High School Education Division: 018-860-5161

Special Support Education Division: 018-860-5135

Lifelong Learning Division: 018-860-5181

Cultural Assets Preservation Office: 018-860-5193

Health and Physical Education Division: 018-860-5201